

Moran to Take Part in Hearing on BSE Testing Process

Ag Secretary, Industry Officials to Answer Questions on New Cattle Testing Procedures

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that he will take part in a joint hearing next week of the House Agriculture and Government Reform Committees to review the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) process of testing for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman will be among those testifying before the committees.

"Since the first case of BSE was discovered last December, USDA has been attempting to get a testing process in place that works well for the industry, for producers and for the consumer," Moran said. "While we're not there yet, progress has been made, and the nation's cattle industry remains strong. This hearing will be a good opportunity to question the Secretary directly about USDA's procedures and policies and help her to better understand what I'm learning from Kansans."

On December 23, 2003, the first U.S. case of BSE, commonly referred to as "mad cow disease," was confirmed in a Canadian dairy cow on a farm in Washington State. Next week's hearing will evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness and adequacy of the surveillance program that has been implemented by USDA since that time.

In addition to Secretary Veneman, also testifying will be Ron DeHaven, Chief Veterinarian with USDA and Phyllis Fong, USDA Inspector General. Also invited to testify are representatives from American Meat Institute, National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Harvard University's Center for Risk Analysis.

"Since this case broke last Christmas, I've encouraged the government and the industry to respond with sound science and common sense" Moran said. "The jury's still out as to whether or not this has been done, and I look forward to hearing firsthand the USDA's thoughts on the process. The basic goal should be to maintain our safe food supply and ensure that producers are not harmed by volatile cattle markets."

###